

Middletown School Readiness Council
Wednesday, October 19, 2016
YMCA Hazen Room
99 Union St.
Middletown, CT 06457

Members Present: Betsy Morgan, Alice Torres, Dawn Dubay, Sheila Daniels, Monica Belyea, Amy Waterman, Beverly Lawrence, Donna Marino, Ed Bonilla, Jerome Long (left prior to meeting due to delay of press conference), Izzi Greenberg, Lina Kronenberger, and Marla Hinz. Also Present: Michelle Peterson, Judi Kenney (Town & Country Program Director).

I. Welcome, Call to Order: Alice Torres opened the meeting at 12:38P.M. welcoming everyone following the Rosa DeLauro press conference here at the YMCA.

II. Acceptance of the September 21, 2016 School Readiness Council meeting minutes: Donna Marino moved to accept the minutes from the above mentioned date. Lina Kronenberger seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

III. Financial Report and Facilitator Report: Dawn distributed the financial report, noting full day/full year slots continue to be filled. The Y filled all but 2 slots in their school day/school year area.

Non-resident Slot Update: Dawn reviewed the policy around non-resident slots. Interested Council members met on Oct. 5th and their recommendation to the Council is to maintain the 15 over-all slots rather than 15 over-all slots divided among the 5 programs and offering 3 slots per program with a review of requests by the co-chairs and SR facilitator, as they are made. A motion to revise our existing non-resident policy to reflect the change from 3 slots per program to 15 slots over-all as mentioned above was made by Monica Belyea. Ed Bonilla seconded the motion. Discussion followed and under that discussion, Izzi noted members suggested the Council watch non-resident slot usage this year and re-evaluate the practice at the end of the year. Alice offered a friendly amendment that this will be an interim policy change and will be reevaluated.

Dawn continued the discussion around wait lists at programs, and asked Judi Kenney to share Town & Country's registration process. Judi has parents fill out the first page of the registration form and does not require a deposit. Consideration is given around the family's residency vs non-residency, working parents vs non-working, children that are 3 yrs. old vs 4 yrs. old, those that have had a preschool experience vs no preschool experience. Judi noted this model is taken from the Head Start guidelines. Alice said the committee discussed this issue and asked Dawn to get information from providers. She will report as information is gathered and this will be discussed in more depth at a later meeting.

IV. Updates: Care4Kids Update: Izzi thanked those present for coming to the press conference earlier with Sen. Rosa DeLauro. Izzi shared the following information around the topic: The Office of Fiscal Analysis reported a 33.4 million dollar deficit this week. She reminded the Council that Care4Kids closed to new families in August and noted it is the state's largest support system for parents with children. Currently, there is up to a 14 million dollar shortfall. Consideration now is around closing all together as families come up for redetermination. This is not a definitive solution and certainly one that will jeopardize many additional families now being served under the program. The Early Childhood Alliance is strategizing on fighting for this program as it impacts child care and employers on many levels as well as the quality of care. Judi noted Care4Kids was a funding stream to support School Readiness programs when the School Readiness Grant was first established. Amy Waterman noted there is a host of changes for programs depending on Care4Kids. Beverly Lawrence added the importance of sharing our concerns with Gov. Malloy and not just our representatives and senators. Izzi suggested centers get involved and enlist their families' involvement. The impact is not just for those under the Care4Kids program, it impacts all parents, families, and child care programs. Judi noted if the Council wants program involvement that a script is very helpful and Izzi agreed noting the Alliance is trying to develop some simple way to get parent voices. Judi asked if Izzi or someone would be willing to come to centers and speak to parents/guardians and Izzi is happy to do that. Amy added FRCs can get involved with the information efforts along with other community groups and/or agencies. Izzi suggested the Chamber of Commerce be added to the

list of groups. She went on to report it takes 14 million dollars just to keep current families in program for this year and then another 33 million thereafter. She explained that when the program was under DSS it was easier to pull funds from other areas and put them toward Care4Kids. Now that it is under the auspices of OEC, it appears fund transfers will not occur.

Presentation of Middletown's Children: A Reference Guide: was made by Izzi to the Common Council. She said it was well received. The Council asked for recommendations. She noted we need to think as a group what those recommendations should be and we should push the Council to support the needs of our children and families. Izzi is going to gather a group together to discuss the items of concern.

Letter of support for Macdonough Preschool Program Update: A suggestion was made at the last School Readiness Council meeting for Dawn to draft a letter of support not to close Macdonough as it houses the Y preschool program and the concern for those children and families the Y serves. Dawn is looking for consensus of the Council on this action. Monica noted we might consider sending a neutral letter focusing on the preschool program. Betsy agreed and suggested the letter to the Board of Education asks the Board to consider the preschool program. Alice suggested speaking to the research of aligned preschool to Grade 3 school success. Macdonough is the only school in the district that addresses the needs of pregnancy to school age children and also is the only walking school. Dawn will develop the letter and send it to the Council. Amy Waterman moved to have Dawn draft a letter outlining the offerings at Macdonough as mentioned above. Donna Marino seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Working City Challenge Update: Ed noted a city focused meeting will be held next Thursday facilitated by Liberty Bank. Local strategies will be worked on. The question arose as to who else should be at the table? Middletown is positioned very well and we have strengths other communities don't have. Ed feels engaging people is key to this economic growth effort. Betsy noted it is good to bring up, but went on to note this is first round planning and then from there it is not sizable enough to transform the community. Ed added although that is the case, they will work with communities to leverage additional funding.

V. Adjournment: Izzi Greenberg moved to adjourn the meeting at 1:30P.M. Ed Bonilla seconded the motion and the motion carried. Alice closed the meeting thanking those present for their attendance.

**The next Middletown School Readiness Council meeting will be held on
Wednesday, November 16, 2016
at
Wesley School
10 Wesleyan Hills Rd., Middletown, CT 06457
from
12:00 P.M. to 1:30 P.M.**

Respectfully Submitted by:
Sheila C. Daniels